



Covenant to Care for Children

Helping Connecticut's
Children in Need.

**STATEMENT REGARDING S.B. NO. 1199 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING
THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' REGIONAL STRUCTURE,
DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE, AND POVERTY EXEMPTION.**

Covenant to Care for Children (CCC) mobilizes and channels the caring and faithful people of Connecticut to advocate for, mentor and provide direct assistance to the children and youth of Connecticut who are abused, neglected or at-risk.

CCC provides for the specific individual needs of around 25,000 Connecticut children every year through our five programs and one project. We work directly with DCF social workers and with social workers from any agency serving abused, neglected and impoverished children.

In response to our participation in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) through DSS, in July 2010, we began collecting data from our DCF social workers relating to the family income levels of the children whom we serve.

Much of our work is preventative and directly addresses the issue of impoverishment vs. neglect found in –

S.B. No. 1199 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' REGIONAL STRUCTURE, DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE, AND POVERTY EXEMPTION.

Subdivision (8) of section 46b-120 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2011):

(8) A child or youth may be found "neglected" who, for reasons other than being impoverished, (A) has been abandoned, (B) is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally or morally, (C) is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to the well-being of the child or youth, or (D) has been abused;

In just two of our smaller programs¹, between July 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010, we served approximately 2000 children, providing beds to children who had no bed to sleep in, other furniture, clothing and much more. The items that CCC provides are basic: diapers, formula, beds, cribs, clothing, linen, etc.

Every child we serve comes to us through a request made by his/her social worker, more often than not a DCF social worker.

¹ Children's Enrichment Fund, Critical Goods



Covenant to Care for Children

*Helping Connecticut's
Children in Need.*

Generally, what we saw with the TANF eligibility forms was the following:

- All families receiving aid were citizens of the US – 100%
- Most families were comprised of at least two children and a caregiver
- Disposable income for these families ranges \$12-15K per year, but most were below \$12K. Income was being used for rent and utilities, even when subsidies were available. There was little, if any, money left over to provide for the basic needs of the children in the household.
- Many families were receiving other forms of assistance: SNAP/WIC/SAGA/TFA
- One thing that seems to surface rather regularly was the need for financial assistance for the adults in the household to get picture ID cards. This is now necessary for employment, to apply for public assistance, and to receive health care.

A CASE STUDY:

A DCF investigator had a report of neglect in a family of four children ranging from infant to 7 years of age. When she visited the family she found the apartment was tidy, the children clean but possessing only one outfit each. The children slept on the floor wrapped in their clothes for warmth. The baby was kept in a closet at night to protect him from rats. There wasn't a stick of furniture in the apartment.

The children attended school; the single mom worked three part-time jobs at minimum wage and used every penny for rent and food. There simply was nothing left over. The investigator determined that there was no issue of neglect in this household, only poverty. She contacted CCC and requested school uniforms, clothing, baby goods, beds for the three older children and a crib for the baby. We provided two bunk bed sets, along with bed linens, towels, stuffed animals, a few age appropriate books, extra clothes, a table and chairs, couch and dressers.

The investigator was able to close the case with a positive report, the children had their basic needs met, and the mother knew that somewhere out there were caring people who understood that she was doing the very best she could and who supported her effort to be a good mom.

CONCLUSION:

Covenant to Care for Children, along with our thousands of volunteers from over 300 faith-based and civic organizations across Connecticut, supports any alteration to the definition of *neglect* that removes the stigma of poverty and allows for the ongoing efforts of CCC and our partner social workers to provide for the basic and special needs of our children.

Caryl Hallberg, Executive Director

Covenant to Care for Children



Covenant to Care for Children

*Helping Connecticut's
Children in Need.*

